DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 156 024 HE 010 140

AUTHOR Tweddale, R. Bruce
TITLE A Survey of Parental Expectations about Grand Valley State Colleges.
INSTITUTION Grand Valley State Colleges, Allendale, Mich. Office of Institutional Analysis.
PUB DATE Dec 74
NOTE 17p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Standards; *Cluster Colleges; *College Choice; *College Environment; *College Freshmen; Institutional Research; *Parent Attitudes; Parent Influence; Parent Reaction; Religious Education; Religious Factors; Research Projects; *State Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *Grand Valley State Colleges MI

ABSTRACT

One hundred twenty-eight parents of first-time freshmen at Grand Valley State Colleges responded to a three-part questionnaire in fall 1973. Responses showed that: 80 percent were satisfied with their child's college choice; 41 percent felt they had some influence on that choice; over half attend church regularly; the three most frequently mentioned reasons for the college choice were small size, location, and curriculum and programs; the cluster college attended did not affect responses; and of the five college environment dimensions used (social, religious, intellectual, regulative, and supportive), parents had high intellectual and low religious expectations for the colleges. (Author/MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

GRAND VALLEY STATE COLLEGES
Office of Institutional Analysis
26 J. H. Zumberge Library
Allendale, Michigan 49401

ED156024

A Survey of Parental Expectations About Grand Valley State Colleges

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Grand Valley State Colleges

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

Office of Institutional Research

R. Bruce Tweddale

December, 1974

HE 010 040

Table of Contents

Background	Section 1.1	pg. 1
Survey Instrument	Section 2.1	pg. 1
Sample	Section 3.1	pg. 2
Results - Part A (Parental Characteristics)	Section 4.1	pg. 2
Results - Part B (Parental Expectations)	Section 4.2	pg. 4
Results - Part C (Reasons for College Choice)	Section 4.3	pg. 7
Analysis of Expectation Items	Section 5.1	pg. 7
Conclusions From Analysis of Expectation Items	Section 5.2	pg. 11
Summary	Section 6.1	pg. 12

Highlights of Findings

One hundred and twenty-eight parents of first-time freshmen at Grand Valley responded to a three part questionnaire Fall, 1973.

1. Eighty percent of the parents responding said that they were satisfied with their son or daughter's choice of college.

2. Forty-one percent felt they had some influence on their son or daughter's choice.

3. Over half report attending church services on a regular basis.

4. The three most frequently mentioned reasons important to the choice of GVSC were small size, location and curriculum and programs, in that order.

5. There is no evidence that parents responded differentially according to the particular cluster college their son or daughter was attending.

6. Of the five college environmental dimensions explored (social, religious, intellectual, regulative and supportive), parents had high intellectual and low religious expectations for Grand Valley.

Section 1.1 Background

During the Fall of 1973, Tom Deschaine (Thomas E. Deschaine), formerly Dean of Students at Aquinas College, asked Grand Valley to participate in a study of how parents viewed the college their son or daughter was attending. The notion was that parents sending their children to different colleges in the region probably had different expectations as to what the campus climate would be. In addition to Grand Valley, Aquinas, Calvin, and Grand Rapids Junior College also participated in the study.

We decided that what Mr. Deschaine expected to find in the study among different colleges in the area might also be true with respect to the cluster colleges. So we asked him to increase his sample of GVSC parents substantially to permit comparisons among the cluster colleges.

While we were not entirely successful in our original intent, the results we did obtain are here being shared.

Section 2.1 Survey Instrument

The survey instrument consists of three parts. Part A contains nine demographic questions that can be answered with a check mark. Part B consists of forty-eight statements which the respondent reacts to by checking boxes marked:

a. Almost always expect this to be true
b. Often expect this to be true
c. Usually expect this to be true
d. Rarely expect this to be true
e. Almost never expect this to be true

Within the forty-eight questions, four topic areas are covered:

Topic	Number of Statements	Example
Social Expectations	9	Students' gathering places are usually crowded.
Religious Expectations	10	Religious services are well attended by students.
Intellectual Expectations	10	The competition for grades is intense.
Regulative Expectations	10	Student organizations are closely supervised.
Supportive Expectations	9	Members of the college community are very friendly.

Part C is open ended. The parents' are asked to list and explain (in order of importance) the most important reasons for choosing Grand Valley.

Section 3.1 Sample

Mr. Deschaine picked the sample at random from a listing of the names and addresses of all first time students who entered Grand Valley during Fall 1973. A letter over Vice President Hills' signature was sent with the questionnaires which gave a GVSC endorsement to the project and encouraged a response. A follow-up letter was sent to non-respondents by Mr. Deschaine. The number of questionnaires sent, by GVSC colleges, and the number returned were:

GVSC College	# Sent	# Returned	% Returned
CAS	163	96	58.9
TJC	27	19	70.4
WJC	16	9	56.3
CIV	19	4	21.1
TOTAL	225	128	56.9

The response rate was so low for CIV as to cast serious doubts on the results for the college. Since we didn't want to simply leave CIV out, their data is included. However, because of the low number involved, great care must be taken in interpreting their data.

Section 4.1 Results - Part A - Demographic Data About Respondent

1. The individual filling out the questionnaire is:

28.1%	Father
45.3%	Mother
25.8%	Both
0.8%	No response

2. Sex of your entering freshman?

47.7%	Male
52.3%	Female
0.0%	No response

3. While college is in session, our freshman son or daughter lives:

29.7%	At home
57.8%	In college housing
12.5%	Other
0.0%	No response

4. Do you have other children who have attended or are now attending a college or university?

58.6%	Yes
41.4%	No
0.0%	No response

5. Are you satisfied with the choice of college your fresman son or daughter is attending?

80.5%	Yes
0.8%	No
17.9%	Somewhat
0.8%	No response

6. How much influence did you and your spouse have in the selection of the college your freshman son or daughter is attending?

28.9%	None
19.5%	Little
41.4%	Some
6.3%	Great
2.3%	Very great
1.6%	No response

7. Indicate the highest level of formal education for each parent:

Father	Mother	
6.3%	2.3%	Less than high school
7.8%	7.8%	Some high school
32.8%	50.8%	High school graduate
24.2%	21.1%	Some college
27.3%	18.0%	College graduate
1.6%	0.0%	No response

8. Do you attend church services on a regular basis?

Father	Mother	
50.8%	64.1%	Yes
41.4%	34.3%	No
7.8%	1.6%	No response

9. Please indicate your marital status:

89.1%	Married
2.3%	Separated
3.1%	Divorced
4.7%	Spouse deceased
0.8%	Other
0.0%	No response

Section 4.2 Results - Part B - Expectations

The following is a listing of the statements and the responses, by percentage, of the 128 parents. The numbers preceeding the statements indicate the original order as presented in the questionnaire.

Social Expectation Statements	Almost Always expect this to be true	Often expect this to be true	Usually expect this to be true	Rarely expect this to be ture	Almost Never expect this to be true
1. There are many opportunities for faculty and students to meet informally.	12	28	46	12	2
6. There are many opportunities for students to attend social activities	24	35	34	4	3
14. There are many opportunities for students to become acquainted with each other.	31	32	34	2	1
16. Students' gathering places are usually crowded.	22	39	48	4	0
26. There are many opportunities for students to get together outside of the classroom.	23	27	41	9	1
29. There are so many things to do that students are always active.	10	24	42	20	3
35. There are many opportunities for students to organize and direct the work of others.	6	27	36	26	4
42. Students are given many opportunities to learn and demonstrate principles of leadership.	21	34	36	7	1
44. At this college many students will meet their future spouse.	1	12	40	40	7
Religious Expectation Statements					
2. There would be a large audience for a lecture by an outstanding theologian.	6	23	37	30	3
5. The college fosters student development in spiritual matters.	6	12	16	45	20
9. Religious services are well attended by students.	4	11	30	32	22
11. This college will assist students in developing moral capacities, ethical standards and values.	27	24	27	14	8
13. This college will assist students in developing a formal religious life style.	2	4	16	32	45
25. This college will give the students a feeling for the necessity of professing a religious faith.	4	9	13	38	35

Religious Expectation Statements (cont.)	Almost Always expect this to be true	Often expect this to be true	Usually expect this to be true	Rarely expect this to be true	Almost Never expect this to be true
31. The college assists students in understanding their religious beliefs.	4	11	22	30	33
36. The college will afford the students ample opportunities to put their religious faith into action.	11	15	27	30	17
41. The college assists students in guiding their conduct according to their religious faith.	5	11	23	34	28
48. Most students attend weekly religious services.	5	8	23	41	23
Intellectual Expectation Statements					
3. The competition for grades is intense.	14	22	31	25	8
4. The professors are dedicated scholars in their field.	38	30	28	3	0
15. Classes are a real intellectual challenge.	33	38	28	2	0
19. Courses require intensive study and preparation outside of class.	29	35	29	6	0
22. The professors are very thorough teachers and really probe into the fundamentals of their subject.	42	23	27	5	2
28. This school is superior to most other colleges.	14	28	36	14	7
34. In order to pass a course, the student must work very hard.	27	35	31	4	2
37. Students at this college are very serious and purposeful about their work.	18	37	37	8	0
43. The general quality of teaching throughout this college is better than most other colleges.	17	37	31	9	5
46. The academic training a student receives at this college is better than most other colleges.	13	27	33	22	5
Regulative Expectation Statements					
7. Students must have a written excuse if they are absent from class.	5	5	4	20	61
10. Students are concerned about taking good care of school property.	27	28	34	6	3
12. This college attempts to regulate most areas of student life.	5	15	26	30	22

Regulative Expectation Statements (cont.)	Almost Always expect this to be true	Often expect this to be true	Usually expect this to be true	Rarely expect this to be true	Almost Never expect this to be true
18. Student organizations are closely supervised.	16	20	27	29	8
20. Most students and faculty have similar attitudes, opinions, and beliefs.	2	9	31	39	16
23. Faculty members and administrators are conservative in interpreting regulations and treat violations very firmly.	21	22	36	11	9
30. The response of college officials toward student sit-ins or other confrontations would be firm and forceful.	34	19	26	16	5
33. Students obey rules and regulations.	28	24	41	5	1
39. Students exert considerable pressure on one another to live up to the expected code of conduct.	11	22	33	26	9
45. The majority of students dress and act pretty much alike.	10	29	47	9	5
Supportive Expectation Statements					
8. The instructors usually check up on students to see that assignments are being carried out properly and on time.	16	13	19	22	29
17. Education on this campus is highly personalized..	23	35	23	17	1
21. The school assists everyone in becoming acquainted.	9	11	41	30	9
24. Members of the college community are very friendly.	26	38	31	2	3
27. Upperclassmen assist new students in adjusting to campus life.	12	23	44	25	6
32. The faculty are interested in students and their problems.	34	30	34	2	1
38. Students take pride in this college.	38	36	30	2	1
40. Professors devote much time to consulting with students.	20	29	34	16	2
47. Students feel they are a vital part of this college.	31	40	44	9	1

It should be pointed out that the questionnaire asked for expectations about "the college your freshman son or daughter is attending" and made no reference to the cluster colleges within GVSC. Thus, the parents could have been viewing either a particular cluster college or GVSC as a whole in responding to the statements.

Section 4.3 Results - Part C - Reasons for Choices of GVSC

Eighty-nine questionnaires were returned with responses on reasons for choice of GVSC. The following is a distribution, by percentage, of the most important reason for the choice:

Reason	%
Small Size	25.8
Location	20.2
Curriculum and Programs	19.2
Friends in Attendance	10.1
Recommendation by Others	9.0
Reputation of GVSC	5.6
Cost	4.5
Atmosphere	3.4
Philosophy of GVSC	1.1
Faculty	1.1
	100.0

Section 5.1 Analysis of Expectation Items (Part B of Questionnaire)

A. Validity

Since this instrument seeks information on expectations, the only validity measure that has much meaning is content validity. Do the statements offered and the response stems given appear to make sense? The reader is encouraged to review the statements and draw his or her own conclusion, since it is a purely subjective question.

With respect to the grouping of statements into the five scales, one might ask the same kind of question. Do all of the statements in a given scale appear to be getting consistent responses? A review of the responses by the author of this report indicates the following might be suspect:

Social Scale

44. At this college, many students will meet their future spouse.

The response is abnormally low at the "almost always" and "often" end of the scale compared to other items.

Religious Scale

11. This college will assist students in developing moral capacities, ethical standards and values.

Response was abnormally high at the "almost always" and "often" level. This is the only item in this scale which does not use words derived from religion, theology or spiritual.

B. Reliability

Does the instrument elicit consistent responses? Ideally, one would do an identical survey on the same group after a period of time had elapsed and then compare the results to answer this question. This action is often not feasible but other methods of determining reliability can be used. In this case, we split the instrument into two parts and calculated the correlation between the two parts.

Using the Guttman Formula for split half reliability, the following correlations were obtained on a sample of 43 respondents:

Sample	Correlation
Whole instrument	.96
Social scale	.90
Religious scale	.90
Intellectual scale	.88
Regulative scale	.90
Supportive scale	.80

Correlations in this range are generally acknowledged to be acceptable estimates of reliability for attitude scales.

C. College and Scale Differences

Since it was determined previously that the scales developed by Mr. Deschaine are both reliable and to some extent valid, we scored each person's responses to Part R. Responses were awarded a value of one to five, with the response "Almost Never expect this to be true" equal to one and the response "Almost Always expect this to be true" equal to five. In this way an increase in score means an increase in expectations for the particular dimension being measured. Thus, an individual who gave all "3" ("Usually expect this to be true") responses to a 10 item scale would have a score of 30 out of a possible 50 on that scale (the range would be 10 to 50). Once individual scores were derived, we computed the mean and standard deviation on each scale for each college and GVSC as a whole. The table with this data appears below.

	Social	Religious	Intellectual	Regulative	Supportive
# of items	9	10	10	10	9
Max. possible score	45	50	50	50	45
CAS					
Mean	30.61	25.00	36.82	30.74	30.86
Standard Deviation	5.11	8.18	6.15	7.43	6.29
TJC					
Mean	30.42	23.68	35.11	28.16	32.21
Standard Deviation	4.66	8.96	7.23	8.25	5.85
WJC					
Mean	30.89	23.22	33.44	29.11	30.78
Standard Deviation	2.52	8.06	4.80	6.05	3.96
CIV					
Mean	31.50	23.75	38.75	27.25	34.25
Standard Deviation	3.79	6.75	3.77	5.80	1.89
All GVSC					
Mean	30.63	24.64	36.37	29.13	31.16
Standard Deviation	4.84	8.19	6.21	7.43	6.01

Adjusting the means of the Social and Supportive scales (multiplying by 10/9) to compensate for the number of items, and putting them in rank order by college produces the following table.

Rank Order of Scales for Sample Population

CAS		TJC		WJC	
Scale	Mean	Scale	Mean	Scale	Mean
Intellectual	36.82	Supportive	35.78	Social	34.32
Supportive	34.28	Intellectual	35.11	Supportive	34.20
Social	34.01	Social	33.80	Intellectual	33.44
Regulative	30.74	Regulative	28.16	Regulative	29.11
Religious	25.00	Religious	23.68	Religious	23.22

CIV		All GVSC	
Scale	Mean	Scale	Mean
Intellectual	38.25	Intellectual	36.37
Supportive	38.05	Supportive	34.62
Social	35.00	Social	34.03
Regulative	27.25	Regulative	30.13
Religious	23.75	Religious	24.64

One can see from this table that this sample of parents hold the strongest expectations for GVSC overall in the intellectual realm. Lowest expectations occur overall, and in each of the cluster colleges, in the religious realm.

Given this data, we are now faced with three questions, We know that the 128 responses to the questionnaire really comprise only a sample of all parents of first-time students. What we'd like to be able to determine is how accurately the responses of this sample reflect all first-time parents. Second, we'd like some indication that the means for the four colleges within each scale represent real population differences instead of sampling errors. That is, do the means reflect true differences in expectations of the cluster colleges on each dimension. Third, we'd like some indication that the mean differences across scales (or dimensions) reflect true differences in expectations in these areas instead of sampling errors.

Certain statistical tests allow us to make these determinations and the above questions will be answered in order below.

Question one: What are the limits of generalizing from the sample to the total pupulation?

We can be 95% sure, or confident, that the mean of the total population for all GVSC first-time parents will fall between the limits indicated below:

95% Confidence Level Mean Intervals

Scale	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
Social	31.46	29.80
Religious	26.06	23.22
Intellectual	37.45	35.22
Regulative	31.41	28.85
Supportive	32.20	30.12

Question two: Do the means shown for the four colleges within each scale represent real population differences or are they sampling errors?

To test for differential expectations among the colleges each dimension we used an "F" ratio from an analysis of variance. In s. an "F" ratio is the variance between colleges divided by the variance w in college scores. In order to be 95% confident that the difference in the means represents a real difference in the total population, the "F" ratio must be equal to or greater than 8.56. Below are the "F" ratios computed.

"F" Ratio of College Means

Scale	Between College Variance	Within College Variance	"F" Ratio
Social	1.33	61.91	.02
Religious	32.00	77.00	.41
Intellectual	34.90	103.86	.33
Regulative	49.67	67.13	.73
Supportive	130.00	31.89	4.07

As can be seen, the "F" ratio is not large enough on any of the scales to assume that the differences between colleges are anything other than a sampling error. This tells us that parents of first-time students at Grand Valley probably relate to GVSC as a whole, rather than having particular and different expectations for their son or daughter in one of the cluster colleges. To some extent, this is not surprising, since the questionnaire made no attempt to include items which might differentiate the climate of a particular cluster college. However, even if there are actual differences across the cluster with respect to the environment as reflected by the questionnaire items, at least parents don't expect them.

Question three: Are the differences between the means of the different scales a reflection of real differences on those particular dimensions, or are they sampling errors?

Unfortunately the author of the scales had nine items on two scales and ten items on three scales. This makes an analysis across all of the scales impossible because the maximum score possible is not the same for all the scales. However, an analysis of the variance of the three scales (religious, intellectual and regulative) which had ten items was carried out to see if the differences in the means were significant. As above, analysis of variance was used. The table below shows the obtained"F" ratios for the three, ten item scales.

"F" Ratios for Religious, ntellectual and Regulative Scales

	Between Scale Variance	Within Scale Variance	"F" Ratio	"F" Ratio Required
CAS	2904.00	83.07	34.95	3.04
TJC	688.00	85.25	8.07	3.18
WJC	225.50	18.79	12.00	3.40
CIV	239.00	65.55	3.64	4.26
Total GVSC	4412.00	53.83	81.96	3.04

The "F" ratios turn out to be significant for all colleges except CIV. (This may be due to the small sample size.) Thus, we can say that the differences between means on each scale represent real differences for the total population and all colleges, except College IV.

Likewise, an analysis of the variance of the two scales with nine items (social and supportive) was computed. The "F" ratios for these two, nine item scales appear below.

"F" Ratios for Social and Supportive Scales

	Between Scale Variance	Within Scale Variance	"F" Ratio	"F" Ratio Required
CAS	36.00	51.66	.69	3.91
TJC	46.00	42.91	1.07	4.11
WJC	3.00	43.00	.06	4.49
CIV	21.00	32.83	.63	5.99
Total GVSC	18.00	29.67	.60	3.89

None of the "F" ratios are significant. That is, there is no significant difference between the means on these two scales.

Section 5.2 Conclusions From Analysis of Expectation Items

1. If all parents of 1973 entering first-time freshmen were to respond to the parental expectations questionnaire, there would be a 95% chance that their expectations on the dimensions explored would be ranked as follows:

All Parents	CAS Parents	TJC Parents	WJC Parents	College IV Parents
Intellectual	Intellectual	Intellectual	Intellectual	*
Regulative	Regulative	Regulative	Regulative	
Religious	Religious	Religious	Religious	

*No specific statement can be made about CIV parents as a distinct group.

2. No conclusion can be drawn about the relative strength of expectations on the Social and Supportive scales as compared to the other three. One might suspect that, if these two scales had contained the same number of items as the other three, they would probably fall between Intellectual and Regulative for "all parents."

3. It was noted that we found no significant difference between the means of the Social and Supportive scales. This would lead one to believe that either the scales are not measuring two different expectations or that the parents have equal expectations in both areas.

4. The evidence indicates no significant statistical difference on any of the scales between the strength of expectation by cluster college. In other words all parents, regardless of the cluster college which their child is attending, tend to respond to each scale in a like manner.

Section 6.1 Summary

As a part of a larger study done by Mr. Thomas Deschaine, we received a response to a questionnaire on parental expectations from 128 parents of new freshmen who entered Grand Valley during Fall 1973. The responses represent 56.9% of the questionnaires sent out.

Parents were asked various background questions about themselves, the reasons their son or daughter choose Grand Valley and a number of questions about the type of college environment they expected to exist at Grand Valley. These latter questions covered five dimensions of the college environment and were grouped into scales correspondingly. For example, questions on the social dimension of Grand Valley included such items as: there are many opportunities for faculty and students to meet informally and there are so many things to do that students are always active. Questions also explored parents' expectations in the religious, intellectual, regulative and supportive aspects of the Colleges' climate.

Our interest in the survey results was threefold. First, we wanted to see if there were differences in parental expectations according to which cluster college was involved. Secondly, what were the relative strengths of expectations on the five scales (social, religious, intellectual, regulative and supportive). Thirdly, what were the primary reasons for choosing Grand Valley as seen from the parents' point of view.

An analysis of the results on the expectation scales failed to show any statistically significant differences in the expectations of parents involved with one cluster college as opposed any other. In other words, the strength of the parental expectations in all five scale areas were the same, regardless of cluster college the son or daughter is attending.

With regard to parents' reactions on the intellectual, regulative and religious scales, it was determined that they have highest expectation on

the intellectual sclae, second highest on the regulative scale and lowest on the religious scale. The parents expressed equal expectations in the areas of social and supportive functions. Because of the scale construction difficulties, nothing definite can be said about the social and supportive expectations as they relate to the strength of expectations in the other three areas.

The two reasons given top priority by most parents for the choice of GVSC are small size and location. It is interesting to note that one of these factors is subject to change as Grand Valley grows.

The only real surprise, or piece of information that is not fairly self-evident, to come out of this study relates to the lack of differences in expectations for parents of students attending different GVSC colleges. This could very well be the result of parents not having any great knowledge of the differences between colleges, and thus tending to have an impression of GVSC as a whole. Since these were all parents of new students, it is interesting to speculate as to whether or not the same thing would be true of parents of students who have been at GVSC for three or four years.